LISTING OF CLAIMS

The listing of claims provided below replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices, comprising:

transmitting a ~~vendor-specific~~ communication having ~~vendor-specific~~ cyclic redundancy check (CRC) data from a first device to a second device, wherein the first device and the second device are associated with a common vendor;

performing both a standard CRC data check and a vendor-specific CRC data check at the second device;

recognizing the communication as a vendor-specific communication when the vendor-specific CRC data check indicates valid vendor-specific CRC data ~~at the second device~~; and

processing the vendor-specific communication at the second device.

2. (Original) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices as recited in claim 1, wherein the vendor-specific CRC data is generated using a vendor-specific CRC data generation method.

3. (Original) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices as recited in claim 2, wherein the vendor-specific CRC data generation method includes use of a vendor-specific seed value in conjunction with a standard CRC data generation method.

4. (Original) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices as recited in claim 2, wherein the vendor-specific CRC data generation method includes use of a vendor-specific CRC data generation formula.

5. (Original) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices as recited in claim 1, wherein the vendor-specific communication conforms to a frame structure of a standard protocol.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices as recited in claim 1, wherein transmitting the ~~vendor-specific~~ communication is performed in accordance with a standard protocol.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices as recited in claim 1 [[~~7~~]], wherein processing the vendor-specific communication at the second device includes processing the vendor-specific communication in accordance with a vendor-specific protocol.

9. (Original) A method for communicating vendor-specific data between devices as recited in claim 1, wherein the first device is a first initiator device and the second device is one of a second initiator device and a target device.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for performing vendor-specific device communication, comprising:

generating a communication including ~~vendor-specific data and vendor-specific~~ cyclic redundancy check (CRC) data;

transmitting the communication from a first device to a second device;

performing both a standard CRC data check and a vendor-specific CRC data check at the second device;

~~recognizing the vendor-specific CRC data as having been generated using a vendor-specific CRC data generation method; and~~

processing the communication at the second device in accordance with a vendor-specific protocol when the vendor-specific CRC data check identifies the CRC data of the communication as representing valid vendor-specific CRC data; and

processing the communication at the second device in accordance with a standard protocol when the standard CRC data check identifies the CRC data of the communication as representing valid standard CRC data.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for performing vendor-specific device communication as recited in claim 10, wherein the vendor-specific CRC data check is performed using a vendor-specific CRC data checker.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for performing vendor-specific device communication as recited in claim 10 [[~~11~~]], further comprising:

recognizing the vendor-specific CRC data as being invalid as a result of performing the vendor-specific CRC check ~~using the vendor-specific CRC checker~~; and

processing the communication at the second device in accordance with a standard protocol.

13. (Original) A method for performing vendor-specific device communication as recited in claim 12, wherein processing the communication in accordance with the standard protocol includes sending a negative acknowledge (NAK) response from the second device to the first device.

14. (Original) A method for performing vendor-specific device communication as recited in claim 10, wherein the vendor-specific CRC data is generated using one of a vendor-specific seed value in conjunction with a standard CRC data generation method and a vendor-specific CRC data generator polynomial.

15. (Original) A method for performing vendor-specific device communication as recited in claim 10, wherein transmitting the communication from the first device to the second device is performed using a standard protocol.

16. (Original) A method for performing vendor-specific device communication as recited in claim 10, wherein the vendor-specific CRC data indicates a type of vendor-specific data included in the communication.

17. (Original) A method for operating a device, comprising:

(a) receiving a communication including cyclic redundancy check (CRC) data;

(b) performing a vendor-specific CRC data check;

(c) identifying the CRC data as representing valid vendor-specific CRC data, the valid vendor-specific CRC data indicating inclusion of vendor-specific data within the communication;

(d) processing the communication in accordance with a vendor-specific protocol in response to identifying the CRC data as representing valid vendor-specific CRC data;

(e) performing a standard CRC data check;

(f) identifying the CRC data as representing valid standard CRC data;

(g) processing the communication in accordance with a standard protocol in response to identifying the CRC data as representing valid standard CRC data;

(h) identifying the CRC data as being invalid, the invalid CRC data representing other than one of valid vendor-specific CRC data and valid standard CRC data; and

(i) processing the communication in accordance with the standard protocol in response to identifying the CRC data as being invalid.

18. (Original) A method for operating a device as recited in claim 17, wherein elements (b) through (d) are performed prior to elements (e) through (g).

19. (Original) A method for operating a device as recited in claim 17, wherein elements (b) through (d) are performed in a substantially parallel manner with elements (e) through (g).

20. (Original) A method for operating a device as recited in claim 17, wherein receiving the communication is performed in accordance with a standard protocol.

21. (Original) A method for operating a device as recited in claim 17, wherein the valid vendor-specific CRC data is generated using one of a vendor-specific seed in conjunction with a standard CRC data generator and a vendor-specific CRC data generator.

22. (Original) A method for operating a device as recited in claim 17, wherein the valid vendor-specific CRC data represents a type of vendor-specific data contained within the communication.

23. (Currently Amended) A device having vendor-specific communication capability, comprising:

a first set of circuitry configured to receive a communication from an initiator device, the communication including cyclic redundancy check (CRC) data;

a second set of circuitry configured to perform a vendor-specific CRC data check, the second set of circuitry being capable of identifying the CRC data as representing valid vendor-specific CRC data, the valid vendor-specific CRC data indicating inclusion of vendor-specific data within the communication; ~~and~~

a third set of circuitry configured to process the communication in accordance with a vendor-specific protocol;

a fourth set of circuitry configured to perform a standard CRC data check, the fourth set of circuitry being capable of identifying the CRC data as representing valid standard CRC data, the valid standard CRC data indicating conformance of the communication to a standard protocol; and

a fifth set of circuitry configured to process the communication in accordance with the standard protocol.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A device having vendor-specific communication capability as recited in claim 23 [[~~24~~]], further comprising:

a sixth set of circuitry configured to identify the CRC data as being invalid, the invalid CRC data representing other than one of valid vendor-specific CRC data and valid standard CRC data; and

a seventh set of circuitry configured to process the communication in accordance with the standard protocol in response to identifying the CRC data as being invalid.